

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

PASSING THE ICEBERGS

The following beautiful lines appear in an English collection of the poems of T. Buchanan Read. We have not seen them in any publication in this country. Mr Read is now in Rome, busily engaged in painting, having several important commissions from England. The present volume is inscribed by the author, to John A. C. Gray, Esq., of New York. *N. Y. Evening Post.*

A fearless shape of brave device,
Our vessel drives through mist and rain,
Between the floating fleets of ice—
Those navies of the northern main;

These Arctic ventures, blindly hurled,
The proofs of Nature's olden force,
Like fragments of a crystal world
Long shattered from its skyey course.

These are the buccaniers that fright
The middle sea with dreams of wrecks,
And freeze the south winds in their flight,
And chain the Gulf Stream to their decks.

At every dragon prow and helm
There stands some Viking, as of yore,
Grim heroes from the Boreal realm
Where Odin rules the spectral shore.

And oft beneath the sun or moon
Their swift and eager falchions glow;
While, like a storm vexed wind, the Rune
Comes chafing through some beard of snow.

And when the far North flashes up
With fires of mingled red and gold,
They know that many a blazing cup
Is brimming to the absent bold.

Up, signal there! and let us hail
Yon looming phantom as we pass;
Note all her fashion, hull and sail,
Within the compass of your glass!

See at her mast the steadfast glow
Of that one star of Odin's throne;
Up with your flag, and let us show
The constellation of our own?

And speak her well, for she might say,
If from her heart the words could thaw,
Great news from some far frozen bay,
Or the remotest Esquimaux.

Might tell of channels, yet untold,
That sweep the pole from sea to sea;
Of lands which God designs to hold
A mighty people, yet to be;

Of wonders which alone prevail
Where day and darkness dimly meet;
Of all which spreads the Arctic sail;
Of Franklin and his ventures fleet.

How, haply, at some glorious goal,
His anchor holds, his sails are furled;
That Fame has named him on her scroll,
"Columbus of the Polar World."

Or how his ploughing bark wedges on,
Through splintering fields, with battered
shares;
Lit only by that spectral dawn,
The mask that mocking darkness wears.

Or how, o'er embers black and few,
The last of shivered masts and spars;
He sits amid his frozen crew,
In council with the norland stars.

No answer but the sullen flow,
Of ocean heaving long and vast;
An agony of ice and snow,
The voiceless North swings proudly past.

From "Guy Livingstone," an English Novel.

RALPH MOHUN.

A WILD IRISH STORY.

It was in the beginning of December, 184— (said Fred Carew); we were sitting down to dinner after a capital day's cock-shooting—besides myself there were Lord Clontarf, Mohun, and Kate, my wife—when we were disturbed by a perfect hail of knocks at the hall door.—Old Dan Tucker or the Spectre Horseman never clamored more loudly for admittance.

Fritz, Mohun's old Austrian servant, went down to see what was up, and, on opening the door, was instantly borne down by the tumultuous rush of Michael Keily, gentleman, agent to half a dozen estates, and attorney at law.—In the two last capacities he had given, it seems, great umbrage to the neighbouring peasantry, they had caught him that night as he returned home, intending to put him to death with that ingenuity of torture for which the fine warm-hearted fellows are justly celebrated.

They did not wish to hurry over the entertainment, so confined him in an upper chamber, while they called their friends and neighbours to rejoice with them, carousing meantime jovially below.

The victim contrived to let himself down from the window, and ran for his life to the nearest

house, which, unluckily happened to be the Lodge. Two boys, however, saw and recognized him as he entered the demesne, and raised a whoop, to show that they knew where the fox had gone to ground.

This we made out from a string of incoherent interjections; and then he lay panting and contorting himself in an agony of fear.

Mohun sat on the hall table, swinging his foot and regarding the spectacle with the indolent curiosity that one might exhibit towards the gambols of some ugly new importation of the Zoological society. When the story was told he pointed coolly to the door.

The shriek that the miserable creature set up on seeing that gesture, I shall never forget.

"Do you think I shall turn my house into a refuge for destitute attorneys?" Ralph said, answering my look of inquiry. "If there was no other reason, I would not risk it with your wife under my roof. A night attack in the West is no child's play."

Kate had come out and was leaning over the gallery. She heard the last words, and spoke, flushing scarlet with anger.

"If I thought my presence prevented an act of common humanity, I would leave your house this instant, Colonel Mohun."

Ralph smiled slightly as he bent his head in courteous acknowledgment of her interruption.

Don't be indignant Mrs Carew. If you have a fancy for such an excitement, I shall be too bappy to indulge you. It is settled then. We back the attorney. Don't lie there, sir, looking so like a whipped hound. You hear?—You are safe for the present. He hardly finished when there came a rushing of feet outside, then hurried whispers, then a knock and a summons.

"We'd like to speak with the Cornel, ay ye please."

"I am here; what do you want?" Mohun growled.

"We want the 'orney. We know that he's within."

"Then I'm afraid you'll be disappointed—It's not my fancy to give him up. I wouldn't turn out a badger to you let alone a man."

You see that he took the high moral tone now.

"Then we'll have him out in spite of yez, two or three voices cried out together.

"Try it," Ralph said; Meantime I am going to dine; 'good night.'

A voice that had not spoken yet was now heard with a shrill, gibing accent. Ah! thin the best of appetites be to ye, cornel, and make haste over yer dinner. Its Pierce Delaney that'll give ye yer supper.

Then they went off.

"The said Delaney is a huge quarryman," Ralph observed. He represents the physical elements hereabouts, as I believe I do the moral. We shall have warm work before morning. He does not like me. Fritz, send Connell up; he is below somewhere."

The keeper came, looking very much surprised. He had been in the stables, and had only just heard of the disturbance.

Get the rifles and guns ready, with bullets and buckshot," his master said. "We are to be attacked it seems."

"The man's bold face fell blankly.

"By the powers, yer honor, I haven't the value of an ounce of powder in the house. I meant to get some the morrow morning afore ye were up."

Mohun shrugged his shoulders, whistling softly.

"Man proposes," he said. Its almost a pity we found so many cocks in the lower copse this afternoon. I have fifteen charges or so in my pistol case. We must make that do, loading the rifles light."

Then he went to a window whence he could see down the road; the moon was shining brightly.

"I thought so; they have got scouts posted already. The barbarians know something of skirmishing after all. Maddox come here."

The groom was a strong English boy, very much afraid of his master, but of nothing else on earth.

"Saddle Sunbeam, and go out by the back gates, keeping well under the shadow of the trees. When you clear them, ride straight at the rails at the end of the paddock. You'll get over with a scramble, I think. Keep fast hold of his head—you musn't fall. Then make the best of your way to A——, and tell Col. Harding, with my compliments, that I shall be glad if he will send over a troop as quickly as possible. They ought to be here in two hours. And, mind, don't spare the horse going, but bring him back easy. You will be of no use here, and I won't have him lamed if I can help it. You'll have to risk a bullet or two as you get into the road; but they can't shoot. Its odds against their hitting you. Now go."

The groom pulled his firelock as if the most ordinary commission had been given him, and vanished.

"Connell Ralph went on. 'go and saw the ladders in the yard half through. They will hardly try the barred windows; but it looks more workmanlike to take all precautions. Then come back, and help Fritz to pile chairs

and furniture all up the staircase, and about the hall near it. Line the gallery with mattresses, two feet deep, leaving spaces to fire through.—Light all the lamps and get more candles to fix about; we shall not see very clearly after the smoke of the first dozen shots. When you have finished come to me. Now we shall back to dinner?"

I am not ashamed to own I had little appetite; nevertheless, I sat down. Kate had gone to her room, if her courage was failing she did not wish to show it."

Suddenly our host got up and went to the window. His practised ear had caught the tread of the horse which Maddox was bringing out as quickly as possible. We watched him stealing along under the trees until their shelter failed him; then he put Sunbeam to speed, and rode boldly at the rails. A yell went up from the road, and we saw dark figures running—then came a shot, just as the horse was rising at the fence. He hit it hard and the splinters flew white in the moonlight, but he was over. We held our breath, while several flashes told of drooping shots after the fugitives.—They did not stop him, though; and to our great relief, we heard the wild rush of the frightened steed, subside into a long stretching gallop, and the wind brought back a cheery hallo—"Forrard, forrard away!"

"So far so good," said Ralph Mohun, as he sat down again, and went in steadily at a woodcock. "Don't hurry yourselves gentlemen, we have three quarters of an hour yet; they will take that time to muster; Clontarf, some hock?"

The boy to whom he spoke held out his glass with a pleasant smile; the coming peril had not altered a tint upon his fresh beardless cheeks—rosy and clear as a page's in one of the Boucher's pictures.

A good contrast he made with the miserable attorney, who had followed us uninvited, (it seems he only felt safe in our presence), who was crouching in a corner, his lank hair plastered round his livid and convulsed face with the sweat of mortal fear.

It struck Mohun, I think; he laid his hand on Clontarf's shoulder, and spoke with a kindness of voice and manner most unusual with him—

"We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
As their tinnell cows the game;
They come as fleet as forest deer,
We'll drive them back as tame."

Even at that anxious moment I could not help laughing at the idea of Ralph quoting poetry—of that grim Saul among the prophets.

I went up to keep up Kate's spirits. She bore up gallantly, poor child, and I left her tolerably calm. She believed in me as a plunger to an enormous extent, and in Mohun still more. When I returned, my companions were in the gallery; this ran round two sides of the hall, which went up to the roof; the only access to the upper part of the house, was by a stone staircase of a single flight. The kitchen and offices were on the ground floor, otherwise it was uninhabited.

Ralph had his pistols with him, and his cavalry sword, long and heavy, but admirably poised, lay within reach.

"I have settled it," he said,—"you and Connell are to take the guns, smooth bores are quickest loaded, and will do for this short distance. Clontarf, who is not quite so sure with the trigger, is to have the post of honor, and guard the staircase with his sabre. Throw another bucket of water over it, Connell—is it thoroughly drenched? and draw the windows up," (these did not reach to within ten feet of the floor), "we shall be stifled else. But there will be a thorough draft when the door is down, that is one comfort. One word with you Carew.—You will do me this justice, whatever happens; unless it had been forced upon me, I would not have risked a hair of your wife's head to save all the attorneys that are patronised by the father of lies. But mark me, if it comes to the worst keep a bullet for her. Don't leave her to the mercy of those savage devils. I know them.—She had better die ten times over than fall into their brutal hands; you must use your own discretion, though; I shall not be able to advise you then—not a man of them will be in this gallery till I am past praying for. Nevertheless I hope and believe all will be right. Don't trouble yourself to reload, Fritz will do that for you. I have given him his orders. Aim very coolly, too, we must not waste a bullet, you can choose your own sword, there are several behind you. Ah! I hear them coming up.—Now, men, to your posts."

There was a tramp of many feet, and the surging of a crowd about and against the hall door. Then a harsh, loud voice spoke:—

"Oost for all, will ye give him up, or shall we take him, and serve the rest of yez as bad? Ye've got women there, too—"

I will not add the rest of the threat for very shame. I know it made me more wolfish than ever I thought it possible to feel, for I am a goodnatured man in the main. Mohun, who is not, bit his moustache furiously, and his voice shook a little as he answered,—

"Do you ever say a prayer, Pierce Delaney?—You need one now. If you live to see tomorrow's sunset, I wish my right hand may wither at the wrist."

A shrill howl pealed out from the assailants, and then the stout oak door cracked and quiv-

ered under the strokes of a heavy battering beam; in a hundred seconds the hinges yielded and the door came clattering in; over it leaped three wild figures, bearing torches and pikes but their chief, Delaney, was not one of them.

"The left hand man is yours, Carew; Connell, take the middle one," said Ralph, coolly as if we had sprung a pack of grouse. While he spoke his pistol cracked, and the right hand intruder dropped across the threshold without a cry or a stagger, with a shot right through the brain. The keeper and I were nearly as fortunate. Then there was a pause—then a rush from without—an irregular discharge of musketry—and the clear part of the hall was crowded with enemies.

"I can't tell exactly what ensued, I know they retreated several times, for the barricade was impassable; and while their shots fell harmlessly on the mattresses, every one of ours told, nothing makes a man shoot straight like been short of powder; but they came on again, each time with added ferocity.

I heard Mohun mutter more than once in dissatisfaction tone, "Why does not that scoundrel show himself? I can't make out Delaney. All at once I heard a stifled cry on my right, and to my horror saw Clontarf cragged over the balustrade in the gripe of a giant, whom I guessed at once to be the man we had looked for so long. Under cover of the smoke he had swung himself up by the balustrade of the staircase, and grasped the poor boy's collar as he looked out encautiously from his shelter, and dropped back into the hall carrying his victim with him.

With a roar of exultation the wild beasts closed around their prey. Before I had time to think what could be done, I heard close to my ear, a blasphemy so awful that it made me start even at the critical moment; it was Ralph's voice, but I hardly knew it—hoarse and guttural, and indistinct with passion. Without hesitating an instant he swung himself over the balustrade, and lighted on his feet in the midst of the crowd. They were half drunk with whiskey, and maddened by the smell of blood; but, so great was the terror of Mohun's name, all recoiled when they saw him thus face to face, his sword bare and his eyes flashing.—That momentary panic saved Clontarf. In a second Ralph had thrown him under the arch of a deep doorway, and placed himself between the senseless body and its assailants. Two or three shots were fired at him without effect: it was difficult to take aim in such a tossing chaos. Then one man, Delaney sprang at him with a clubbed musket. "At last!" we heard Mohun say, laughing low and savagely in his beard as he stepped one pace forward to meet his enemy. A blow that looked as if it might have felled Behemoth was warding dextrously by the sabre, and by a quick turn of the wrist, its edge laid the Rapparee's face open in a bright scarlet gash, extending from eyebrow to chin.

His comrades rushed over his body, furious though somewhat disheartened at seeing their champion come to grief; but they had to deal with a blade that had kept half a dozen Hungarian swordsmen at bay, and with point or edge, it met them everywhere, magically. They were drawing back, when Delaney recovering from the first effects of his fearful wound, crawled forward, gasping out curses that seemed floating on the torrent of his rushing blood, and tried to grasp Mohun by the knees and drag him down.

"Fah! it was a sight to haunt one's dreams.—(You might have filled my glass some of you, when you saw it empty.)"

Ralph looked down on him, laughed again; his sabre whirled round once, and cleared a wide circle; then trampling down the wounded man by main force, he drove the point through his throat, and pinned him to the floor. I tell you I heard the steel plainly as it grated on the stone. There was an awful convulsion of all the limbs and then the huge mass lay quite still.

Then came a lull for several moments. The Irish cowered back to the door like penned sheep. Their ammunition was exhausted, and none dared to cross the hideous barrier that now was between them and the terrible Cuirassier.

All this took about half the time to not that it does to tell. I was hesitating whether to descend or stay where my duty called me—near my wife. Fritz knelt behind me; silent and motionless; he had got his orders to stay by me till the last; but the sturdy keeper rose to his feet.

"Faix," he said, "I am but a poor hand at the swording, but I must help my master anyhow," and he began to climb over the breastwork.—The colonel's quick glance caught the movement and his brief imperious tone rang out over the hubbub loud and clear.

Don't stir, Connell; stay where you are. I can finish with those hounds alone."

As he spoke he dashed in upon them with lowered head and uplifted sword.

I don't wonder that they all recoiled; his whole face and form was fearfully transfigured; every hair in his bushy beard was bristling with rage, and the incarnate devil of murder was gleaming redly in his eyes.

Just then there was a wild cry from without, answered by a shriek from my wife, who had been quiet till now. At first I thought that some-